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ABSTRACT

This practicum report describes an intervention to teach preschool children to resist gender bias. The stated intervention objectives were as follows: (1) children will exhibit a 20 percent reduction in gender-stereotyped behaviors as measured by experimenter observation; (2) at least 20 percent of children will demonstrate an understanding of counterstereotypical knowledge as measured by the Sex Role Learning Index; (3) after 3 months, 50 percent of children will demonstrate a reduction in sex role stereotyping of play items as measured by the Sex-Typed Picture Test; (4) parents will increase their knowledge about eliminating sex role stereotyping as measured by a parent survey; (5) children will correctly use the word "stereotype" in conversation; and (6) children will exhibit an ability to resist gender bias as measured by experimenter observation. The intervention consisted of three components. Parents attended meetings at which issues relevant to sex role stereotyping were examined. In 12 weekly sessions with the children, the experimenter discussed issues and conducted activities concerning sex stereotyping. Throughout the intervention, the classroom teacher provided children with books, songs, and role playing opportunities that addressed issues of sex stereotyping. Results indicated that the objectives were met. A 42-item reference list, and a 13-item bibliography of books for children and adults, are provided. Appendices include questionnaires, measurement instruments, and related items. (BC)

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SOCIAL STUDIES FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN THROUGH COGNITIVE INTERVENTION OF THE ACQUISITION OF SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPES

by
Jill Morris Glickman

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A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for Advancement of Education of Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

June 1992

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ABSTRACT

Social Studies for Preschool Children through Cognitive Intervention of the Acquisition of Sex-Role Stereotypes.
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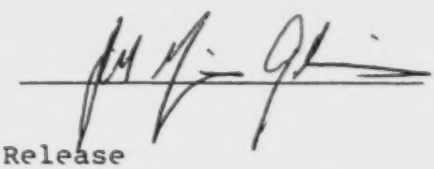
Despite efforts to create a nonsexist preschool environment, preschoolers continued to demonstrate negative stereotypical sex role behavior. Additionally, they continued to articulate an unexpectedly high level of gender-based stereotypical attitudes. Ten preschool students took part in a program that was designed to teach children to recognize and resist gender-based bias. Questionnaires, observational records, anecdotal evidence, and the Sex Role Learning Index (Edelbrock & Sugawara, 1978) were used to assess the level of sex role knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. The program approached the problem by training parents and through the use of critical thinking skills and the justification of judgements made by the children. A variety of media, that the children are often exposed to, were used as means of communication and as sources to stimulate discussion. Parents were offered a training session and written information regarding sex role stereotypes.

The results indicated that children significantly increased their levels of sex-role flexibility, attitudinally and behaviorally, and cognitively incorporated ways of responding to the gender bias surrounding them. It was concluded that children need to be specifically taught to recognize and resist gender bias in order to increase the level of sex-role flexibility beyond the classroom and to expand their options of behaviors and attitudes. The program will be implemented throughout the school and workshops will be directed by the author for parents in the community. Appendices include questionnaires, examples of testing and recording instruments, guidelines for record-keeping, a list of what parents can do, and a list of reference materials.

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.



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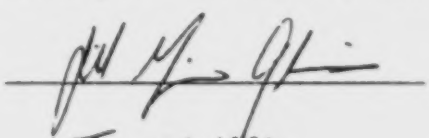

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CHAPTER 1

Purpose

School and Community Setting

The school in which this practicum was implemented is a small school serving children from the age of three to five. The classes are divided among three and four year olds and four and five year olds. The class that was a part of the project consists of four and five year old pre-kindergarten students. Within the class there are 18 students, 10 of whom were given parental permission to participate in the individual testing portion of the study.

The head teacher is the owner and the director of the school and has a master's degree in early childhood education. The teacher has been teaching preschool age children for fifteen years and follows a developmental approach to the education of young children. The teacher was clearly aware of the type of gender stereotyping that is demonstrated by four and five year old children and had expressed an interest in finding ways to teach children to resist bias at all levels.

The school setting is amicable to implementing a program designed to reduce sexual stereotyping in preschool children. There is a book corner, a puzzle and manipulatives area, an audio table, two tables used for artwork and lunch, a two-sided easel, a large area for building blocks, and a housekeeping corner. Outside, the playground is fenced in and consists of a sandbox, a metal tunnel, a half-dome set of monkey bars, a central play area with slides and poles, and a raised platform in which the children can play on top and underneath. There is a covered area over two picnic tables and a child-powered merry-go-round. There is a separate music room with assorted instruments and a piano. This room is used for the after school program and holds closets full of dress-up clothes and an array of building toys and games. In addition, this room serves as a place where parents can review resources and "check-out" books for their own education. The entire school and the materials in it are equally accessible to all of the students and their families.

Writer's Role

The writer is an active feminist and the parent of two female children, one newborn and one was a student

at the school but was not a member of the class that was affected. The writer has done previous work with preschool children, but is not a member of the staff of the school. The writer acted as an observer and took part in implementing a portion of the curriculum designed for the practicum project. The writer took part in the majority of the pre- and post-testing. The students were aware only that the writer was "learning to be a teacher" and that the writer would be present to "ask questions and learn about children." The writer had implicit trust in the head teacher to successfully implement any areas of the program that the writer was not present for and was in daily contact with the teacher when any changes needed to be introduced.

Problem Documentation

Despite efforts to establish a nonsexist curriculum for the target group of students at the school, teachers and parents had not been able to diminish the level of gender-based stereotyping that the target group of children demonstrated. It had been expected that a curriculum absent of sex role stereotyping would reduce the incidence of limiting and detrimental sex-typed behaviors and attitudes. This

had not occurred, sex-role stereotyping by the children continued regardless of the non-sexist atmosphere.

Both the teacher and the writer have been made fully aware of the problems that are created by gender stereotyping in young children through research on the subject. Because of this awareness by the teacher much of what could be done to reduce its incidence had already been accomplished. Neither sex was restricted to the clothes they choose for "dress-up". For dramatic activities roles were chosen at random with no mention of the sex of the child playing a role (i.e. a boy could play the part of "Little Red Riding Hood" or the "Big Bad Wolf"). The teachers were careful not to compliment children on their clothing but on their accomplishments and to equally divide all responsibilities among all students regardless of their sex. Both boys and girls equally participated in housekeeping and building activities. Anatomically correct dolls were available to all the students and the class was never divided by the basis of gender. The books available to the students were all carefully chosen and nonsexist because many children's books often depict boys in the active role and girls in a

supportive role, thus limiting the options for behavior for young boys and girls.

The school environment had been consciously developed to promote a nonsexist atmosphere with the exception that all of the teachers were female. It had been expected that this environment would cause a tremendous reduction in the incidence of sex role stereotyping. However, after years of trying the level of stereotyping reached a plateau demonstrated by the students behaviors and attitudes.

When it was determined that there would be an overt effort to solve the problem of sex role stereotyping among the students, anecdotal records were kept for a period of one week recording incidences of any clear sex-role stereotypical behaviors and attitudes (using the Guidelines for Collecting Anecdotal Evidence; Appendix A:93). Records were kept for all students regardless of whether parents gave permission for their children to be individually tested. This had no effect on the outcome of the solution strategy because all solution measures were administered during group sessions with all of the students.

It is important to note that the basis for evaluating the level of sex role stereotypes is found in general American culture. Essentially, what would be considered gender specific stereotypical behavior is common knowledge among those who live in the United States. For purposes of this project stereotypical gender roles are defined as behaviors, actions, and emotions that are generally accepted, expected, and rewarded by society at large only when exhibited by a member of the appropriate sex.

Examples of sex role stereotypes have a wide range and affect almost every aspect of our daily lives, however, they can be broken down into different basic expectations. For instance, it is generally assumed that compassion, kindness, passivity, and patience are feminine traits. In opposition to that aggression, independence, vulgarity, and competitiveness are considered male traits. In relationship to the labeling of male and female traits are the divided occupational roles that most often depict the women in a supportive role to the man (i.e. men are doctors, women are nurses). Until fairly recently, these roles were clearly divided and there was very little crossover without significant emotional repercussions.

Today, children are faced with less structurally established gender role expectancy. However, children continue to bring sex role experiences into play with each other and sex role behaviors versus ordinary developmental behaviors are difficult to discern when peer interaction is present. Additionally, modification of all negative behavior, regardless of its stereotypical nature is desirable. But it must be understood that a portion of this negative behavior is based in the notion that boys should play "rough" and girls should remain "quiet and not too smart."

Furthermore, what is defined as normal and acceptable behavior for boys and girls has differed somewhat on the basis of gender. It is the desire of the teacher and the writer to encourage the same positive attributes for both boys and girls. Independence, self-sufficiency, cooperation, enhancement of verbal communication skills and sound reasoning abilities are desirable for all students and will be encourage for all, not just those whose gender makes those skills more attainable and attractive. In the attempts to redirect negative sex role behaviors the concentration will not be on how the teacher can encourage counterstereotypical behavior, but on how the

teacher can encourage positive behavior. Yet at the same time, the teacher will recognize that the foundation for the negative behaviors may be a result of a child trying to conform to sex role expectations.

Examples of incidences relating to gender-based stereotypes include two boys, who do not exhibit male traits of competitiveness and high levels of activity, almost exclusively play with each other with very little contact with other boys or girls. Boys have also demonstrated their stereotypical roles through avoidance and punishing types of behavior. When one boy was crying because he was minorly injured during block play by another boy, the student who caused the injury, after suggestion by the teacher, refused "to give him a hug to help him feel better." One boy, in a clear attempt to distinguish himself from the girls that were also playing in the sand box "making food", said that he was "making poison stuff for the girls because I want them dead." During the same play period, another boy blatantly took the shovel out of the boy's hand who was playing with the girls in the sand box. Boys were often seen making lasers and weapons out of ordinary objects. One boy, during wood working exclaimed, "This is what real men do."

Girls also exhibit stereotypical behavior, such as the close proximity that one stereotypically feminine girl had towards the writer during all of the observational periods. She also expressed her femininity through telling the writer that "You look very pretty today," while not getting involved in any activities during free-play despite efforts to engage her. Another girl, who has been established as being very intelligent by the teachers, was seen crying because another girls said she was "mean" and the child felt that meant they did not like her. One girl who almost exclusively plays with boys, and is somewhat ostracized by the other girls, demonstrated how displaying counterstereotypical behaviors can be detrimental. She was described by one boy as "not really a girl." To the opposite extreme a very feminine girl, who will only wear "pretty" dresses walked around all day asking, "Doesn't my hair look pretty?" In addition, sex-segregated play is consistently observed, though it is reasonable to assume that it occurs much less frequently than at facilities that do not make an effort to provide a nonsexist curriculum.

While this is only a small sample of behavioral incidences of sex-role stereotyping other measures were used in order to establish the gender-based attitudes that the children hold. The most striking of these measures was the Sex-Typed Toy Picture Test (Appendix B:95) adapted from experiments used by Perry, White and Perry (1984). In this test the children viewed photographs of play items appropriate for their age. Photographs of four masculine typed items (a football, lawn mower, fire engine, and police car), four feminine typed items (a doll, shopping cart, doll house, and kitchen supplies), and four neutral items (a toy soldier doll, crayons, books, and a manipulative maze) were used in the testing. Children were taken into a separate room and asked to sort the pictures into boxes that were labeled with pictures of children. All of the children were told to "place the pictures in the box if you think they are for only girls, only boys, or for both boys and girls," while the writer pointed to the appropriate box. All of the students, with the exception of one girl, named at least two items exclusively for the opposite sex.

This certainly suggested that the children were clearly willing to exclude themselves from play with

certain objects simply because of the perceived cultural bias against children playing with toys deemed appropriate for the opposite sex.

In a questionnaire designed by the writer (Appendix C:97) but adapted from Busch and Schau (1980), children were tested for gender identity (the knowledge of their own gender) and gender constancy (the recognition that gender remains constant throughout life). All of the students were clearly aware of their own gender and gender constancy. They were also asked if men or women can be certain sex-typed professions. A significant number of children replied that men could not be ballet dancers or teachers and that women could not be doctors, fire fighters, truck drivers or pilots. At least one student replied no when asked "could a woman/man be...?" to all of the above stated professions. Most children replied "no" to at least one. This clearly showed that these children are already, by the age of five, limiting themselves on the basis of their sex.

When asked if their "are special things that you can/cannot do just because you are a boy/girl (the sex of the child)?", the responses varied from "no," to ideas such as "jump down from a roof," "cartwheels,"

"stand on one foot," buy a radio," "wear earrings," "light candles," and "walk." When children gave any response other than "no" to the question stated above, they were asked, "you can/cannot do these things just because you are a boy/girl?" All of their answers were "yes." Whether or not these answers are appropriate and fall within the guidelines of what adults perceive as sex-appropriate, they did suggest that a significant number of students believe that they can and cannot do specific things just by the virtue of identifying with a specific gender.

With the exception of one boy, most of the children had very modern views on the division of housework and emotional traits of both males and females; they felt that both men and women were equally capable under these circumstances. Though, one question stood out because it was answer unanimously. When asked "are women powerful?", every child answered "no." That certainly displayed the level of acceptance of societal sex-role stereotypes as fact for the target group of children.

Children, during this pretesting period were also asked to draw pictures of a boy and a girl, then they were asked to explain the differences. In concurrence

with previous studies (Seegmiller, et al.,1979) the children drew differing pictures for each sex. Though some children drew pictures closely resembling each other and others drew pictures that were completely different from each other, this may be due to different levels of drawing abilities. When asked to explain the differences, common responses were, "the girl has long hair and the boy has short hair" but others were as obscure as, "the girl has shoes and the boy doesn't." As expected no children attributed the visual differences between boys and girls as anatomical in nature. This was in agreement with Birnbaum (1981), that children base most of their judgements of gender on outward appearances.

In addition, parents have expressed an interest in eliminating sex role stereotyping in their own children. For many of the parents it was a significant reason for sending their children to this specific facility. In a questionnaire that the parents received in preparation (Parent Questionnaire; Appendix D:100) for this study, the parents responded that they found it important for their children not to adhere to specific gender related stereotypes. For boys the responses included, "believing that boys and girls are

capable of doing the same things," "being willing to help with the cooking and housework," and "not being aggressive." The parents of girls responded that they felt it was important for their daughters "not to be too much into dolls," "not to act as the helpless female," "not to be the 'fixer' in the family," and "not to act meek and uncertain."

Parents were also asked if they have tried anything in their homes to reduce the level of sex role stereotyping. In all but one of the families of the target group of children, the parents expected some degree of stereotypical sex role behavior, but would prefer to have their children thrive regardless. One parent did not want her son "wearing makeup or pretending to be a girl." Most of them had and felt that some of their experiences were successful and others were not. Six of the ten sets of parents felt that a program that worked to eliminate gender based stereotyping would possibly benefit their child's self-concept and self-esteem, increase their learning experiences and give them a better understanding of others.

Of the children participating in the study seven have parents that are married to each other. One

female student has a divorced mother living with a male "significant other." One male student has divorced parents and is living with only the mother and the father is in another state. And one female child is living with her natural mother and step-father. There are six girls and four boys that will be part of the program. Four of the mothers work outside of the home, one works part time. All of the male figures in the children's households work full-time outside the home. The parents generally have college degrees or higher and play a significant role in the community. Socioeconomically, they range from middle to upper-middle income levels. All of the children are Caucasian. The parents claim that they share household duties, however, most of the chores are not divided in half but on the basis of the activities for which each parent is responsible. The general parental norms as seen by the students is that of divided sex role attributes with some variations depending on the specific parent.

The way children treat each other had been of great concern. Most of the problems had been observed during free play with the all of the children.

Sex-segregated play was common but integrated play was evident. The most disturbing instances were when children have berated or ignored other children who perform sex-inappropriate activities. Children's feelings have been hurt and they have already learned that ostracism will occur if a person does not work within the cultural constraints. Problems were also evident in that children have blatantly stated that another child may not play with an object because it was "only for boys/girls." Children have demonstrated a difficulty in expressing, with their peers, the nonsexist attitudes that the school has attempted to create.

With all of this information taken into account, it was clear that parents saw a need to reduce or eliminate gender-based stereotyping and that the teachers were searching for new ways to intervene in the acquisition of sex role stereotypes in the school. In addition, the children had clearly demonstrated that they had adopted many of the cultural norms associated with their own gender to their detriment and they had verbally expressed that it was the source of much sex-typed antisocial behavior among boys and girls.

Causative Analysis

Essentially there are two accepted schools of thought on how gender stereotypes are acquired. The first, the gender schema theory (Carter & Levy, 1988) or cognitive-developmental theory (Kohlberg, 1966), assumes that a child of approximately the age of two and half or three years old has learned his or her gender identity and is presently absorbing information in particular about his/her own sex and information about the other sex by elimination, and that child uses the information to determine acceptable behaviors, attitudes and attributes. Carter and Levy state that

> gender is an organizing principle used to construct views of the social world, and that knowledge of one's gender is a prerequisite for development of gender schemas (1988:782).

The second theory,the social learning theory believes that even before one learns to identify his/her own gender that attitudes are forming in regard to the roles that males and females play in society. No matter how sex-role stereotype acquisition is viewed, it has been established that gender based stereotypes by the age of four to five years old they are deeply embedded in the minds of children (Cahill,1983).

Cognitive theory suggests that in the minds of children is an organizational framework that is a schema for child to process information (Carter & Levy, 1988). Gender concepts do, in fact develop much in the same way or as part of self-concept (Intons-Peterson, 1988). Unquestionably, if children know their own gender, these children can fit aspects of their personalities into their schema and positive self concepts will develop in the gender area if the children adhere to the schema they have developed for their own gender.

Because the theories of gender role acquisition are applicable to all children it is fair to assume that the sources of the target group's sex-role knowledge are similar to those of the general population. Unfortunately, simply creating an atmosphere for which everyone is equal does not change the gender schema that children have adopted for themselves. Children by the age of five have a very high degree of understanding as to what is acceptable for boys and girls as well as men and women (Bradbard,et al., 1986). They learn it from watching the people in their own home, from their teachers, from their peers, and from television, literature, music,

toy stores, and society at large. They create very sound ideas as to who is proficient at what by making observations in their world. Thus, if they have only seen male doctors on television, in books, and in real life they will tend to believe that only men can be doctors or that all doctors must be male. Similarly, if they only see women in the role of caregiver they naturally assume that women are more capable of the work or that they are simply better at it.

Once children become aware that they will be judged on their adherence to gender roles they, boys more than girls (Lamb & Roopnarine, 1979), pay close attention to what is acceptable and what is not. They learn what they are rewarded for and for what they are punished. The framework can and will change with age and experience. Some ideas will be altered and adjusted others may be completely eradicated and replaced with contradictory concepts. Gender concepts, however, are multi-dimensional. They come from a variety of sources and become a whole product from an array of information.

Though the school and its faculty had attempted to create an environment in which children are not restricted by gender, it did not eradicate what had

been previously learned. Outside sources and peer interaction continue to play a strong role in development of gender schematization. The target group of children had not been actively and specifically taught to resist bias. They had not developed the skills to use their knowledge of equality outside of the classroom. For the children at the school the reduction of sex role stereotypes was situational to the classroom.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Research has shown that sex role stereotyping is limiting for all children. Females are often limited in their social and cognitive development by restricting their exposure to the wide range of learning situations and experiences (Bem & Bem, 1973; Fagot & Littman, 1976). Males in this society are clearly more restricted in their expression and boundaries of sex roles than their female counterparts (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974).

In addition, the children are bombarded with messages that teach them that women and men have separate roles in society and that punishment will result if they break some of those barriers. They know they will be rewarded if they adhere to the gender role

messages they are exposed to. To children for whom the gender role limitations present a barrier to activities and behaviors they desire, the early incorporation of sex role stereotypes in society is detrimental (Pogrebin,1980). The messages the children receive are also totally inconsistent with the realities of the new ways in which gender roles are divided by comparison to the roles established in previous years. Television and literature offer false notions of what boys and girls and men and women are supposed to do and enjoy (Heintz, 1987).

It is essential to a person's mental health to have a wide range of traits, attributes and behaviors to call on for diverse situations (Intons-Peterson, 1988). People judged to be well-adjusted have been defined not as feminine females or masculine males, but as androgynous (Bem, 1974). Some one with high levels of traits attributed to both genders is simply more capable to deal with a variety of experiences better that someone without that range. The need to strictly adhere to the false stereotypes that exist for both men and women can do damage to one's future by creating barriers to experiencing essential parts of life. The self-concepts of children can be enhanced if

stereotypes were reduced or eliminated because they can be open to a range of experiences and knowledge that provide them with more opportunities.

Outcome Objectives

In order to determine that the children have developed methods to resist gender stereotyping and bias and that they have also allowed themselves the freedom to function outside of their stereotypical roles the following objectives were specified as results that would indicate success. Development of parental knowledge was also essential to a successful solution to the problem because the children will live in their home environment far longer than they will be a part of the school setting.

Over a period of twelve weeks, the students should demonstrate an overall reduction of gender based stereotypical behaviors by 20 percent as measured by writer observation (Appendix A:93) during free play periods.

Within twelve weeks 20 percent of the children should demonstrate that they have cognitively integrated counterstereotypical knowledge and flexibility into their gender schema as shown in a 30 percent change in the responses to the Sex Role

Learning Index (SERLI; Edelbrock & Sugawara, 1978; Appendix E:104).

After a three months, 50 percent of the target group should demonstrate a reduction in the sex-role stereotyping of play items by attributing 25 percent more items to both boys and girls on the Sex-Typed Picture Test (Appendix B:95).

A minimum of 60 percent of the parents should increase their knowledge of ways to eliminate sex role stereotyping in their own children by 25 percent, as evidenced by parental response on a survey (Appendix F:109) after the twelve week implementation period.

In order to demonstrate that the children have the vocabulary to communicate their level of understanding of sex role stereotypes, each subject of the target group should learn the meaning of the word "stereotype" and use it correctly at least once during conversation within three months, as observed by the teacher and/or parents.

During the same period 80 percent of the target group should have exhibited their knowledge of the skills and reasoning abilities needed to recognize and resist gender bias at least one time during a the

twelve week session, as noted by observation by the writer during story readings.

CHAPTER 2

Research and Solution Strategy

Research

In researching the literature regarding sex stereotypes in preschool children it was discovered that some of the most pertinent studies were done prior to 1982. Any study that is dated previously represents a landmark study in relationship to the subject due to the repeated references to the studies and use of the results in more recently dated academic literature.

Carter and Levy (1988) found, in accordance with Martin and Halverson (1981), that highly gender schematic children tend to show distortions in memory of schema inconsistent material. Twenty-eight boys and 32 girls with an average age of 52 months were participants in two individual interviews held within one week. They were assessed for gender constancy, their knowledge of sex-role stereotypes and their beliefs in the flexibility of those stereotypes during the first interview by the use of the Sex Role Learning Index (SERLI; Edelbrock & Sugawara, 1978). The second interview tested recognition and recall, and a toy

preference task and task of schematic processing were implemented.

Gender schematic children, children who have already fully incorporated gender stereotypes in their minds, showed a higher level of transformation of stereotypic-inconsistent information to stereotype consistent information. They also found that same-sex toy preferences were highly associated with the level of gender schematization of a child and that the children with a more highly developed schema of gender had far less recognition and recall of stereotypically inconsistent behaviors. Carter and Levy concluded that the intense effect of "gender schemas influence sex-typing in choices and affect the processing of schema-inconsistent information"(p. 790).

In a study by Bradbard and Endsley (1983), 18 boys and 18 girls, ages five and six, were introduced to previously determined novel and gender-neutral objects. The objects were randomly assigned labels of "for boys," "for girls," and "for both boys and girls." They were then allowed to play with the toys individually and were measured for levels of "tactual exploration" and the number of questions that the children had about each toy. One day, and then one

week, later the children were asked to both recognize the toys and recall the sex-typed label initially assigned.

The results showed that children were most likely to seek information about items assigned to their own sex and to both sexes, but unlikely to ask question about objects label for the other sex. The older the age of a child the less likely they were to remember information about the objects labeled for the opposite sex. Children carefully avoided learning about items deemed appropriate for the other sex.

In a subsequent study, Bradbard et al. (1986), attempted to discover the influence of sex-type labeling on both performance and competence measures of recall and exploration. Neutral and novel toys in boxes labeled for gender were introduced to children ages four to nine (31 boys and 25 girls). They were told the names of the objects and three pieces of information about the function of the objects. Information seeking, tactual exploration and recall were tested. The recall portion of the testing consisted of a control group and a experimental group of children that were given incentives (choosing a toy

out of a "treasure chest") for remembering information about the objects.

The results of tactual exploration and information seeking basically mimicked the results of the previous study by Bradbard and Endsley (1983). However, the recall information showed that incentives did not play a significant role in the recall of opposite-sex items. They concluded that, due to the selective memory of children based on high levels of gender role stereotypical knowledge, performance is less effected than competence. In explanation of their finding Bradbard et al. (1986:486) state:

> Sex stereotypes appear to serve a variety of functions, including determining what children will explore, and the kinds and amounts of information they will learn. Apparently, children learn sex-typed labels because they provide information about "what is for me" and "what is not for me." However, children's in-depth knowledge acquisition appears to be selective, that is, they remember more about sex-appropriate objects than about sex-inappropriate objects. The failure of the incentive condition to alter performance indicates that for in-depth knowledge, sex stereotypes impose restrictions on learning rather than having a direct impact on performance. The resulting lack of requisite knowledge about opposite-sex roles and behaviors limits the kinds of activities that children can engage in competently. Thus, selective learning may then lead to selective behavioral performance.

They suggest that competence plays a far more significant role than performance in determining the future abilities of children.

As recently as 1990, Doescher and Sugawara found the relationship between sex-role flexibility and prosocial behavior as defined as "cooperating, sharing, and helping others" (p. 111). They used the Modified Sex Stereotype Measure II (Granberg, 1979) to assess the individual levels of sex-role flexibility in 16 boys and 18 girls, ages three to five years. They correlated the information with teachers' perceptions of the children's behavior as measured by the Modified Prosocial Behavior Questionnaire (Weir & Duveen, 1981).

They found that, in boys, sex-role flexibility was a determining factor of prosocial behavior. The same relationship was not found in girls. This was attributed to the notion that adherence to feminine sex-role stereotypes tends to foster prosocial behavior in girls. Thus, a girl with low levels of sex-role flexibility is more prone to behaving in a more positively associated social manner.

Cobb, Stevens-Long, and Goldstein in 1982 sought to establish a relationship between televised models of sex-typed toy preferences and the effect on

children's choice of toys. Eighteen boys and 18 girls from the age of four to six, were shown one of three 20 minute videotapes. The videotapes used Muppet characters (one male and one female, the female character was the male puppet with a ponytailed wig) discussing the sex-appropriateness of a previously tested, gender-neutral, set of toys. There was one masculine film, one feminine film and one neutral film, each had the characters justifying why a particular toy was for the specified sex.

After viewing the films the children were introduced to a table full of the toys used in the film and a group of toys that had previously been proven to be much less attractive and played with less often than those shown in the films. Children were able to play with the toys for ten minutes while the experimenter left the room and another stayed to observe. The toys chosen and length of time spent playing with each toy were recorded.

The results indicated that both boys and girls spent more time playing with the test toys when they were identified in the film as sex-appropriate. When the toys identified as sex-inappropriate were available the comparison toys were played with more often and

longer. These results suggest that televised information regarding sex-appropriateness of toys is a strong determinate of preference for toys labeled sex-appropriate and rejection of toys labeled inappropriate.

Perry, White and Perry (1984) attempted to discover if "early sex-typing was a result of children's attempts to match their behavior to sex role stereotypes" (p. 2114). By testing 128 children separated by age, from two to five years, with 64 photographs previously determined as "mainly for boys," "mainly for girls," and "neutral." Sex-typed toys were paired with neutral toys and the children were asked which toy they would like to play with the most. Children's preferences were measured by the choices they made. Thus, if a child chose a neutral toy over that of a sex-inappropriate toy it indicated a rejection of the other sex-role stereotype and if a child chose a same-sex toy over that of a neutral toy it was considered that the child demonstrated an acceptance of their own sex stereotype. The children were also tested for their knowledge of sex-role stereotypes.

They found that among two year olds little sex typing took place but by the age of three the degree of choosing sex-appropriate toys increased dramatically, particularly for the boys. It was determined that the boys, more so than the girls, not only demonstrated an acceptance of the same-sex toys but a rejection of toys deemed appropriate for the opposite sex. In addition, their preference for same-sex toys clearly was more established than their knowledge of sex-role stereotypes.

They concluded that sex role stereotyping in the early years goes beyond self socialization and proposed that parents and other sources of social sex role stereotypes serve not only as models, but catalysts to stereotypical schematization by furnishing children with culturally defined activities and toys appropriate for their child's sex. In addition, they suggested that sex-role appropriate behaviors and mannerisms were rewarded by parents.

Schau, et al.(1980) studied the relationship between children's toy selection of their parents' expectations. Parents of 52 children ages three to five were asked to predict how frequently their children would play with each of 12 adult defined sex

typed and neutral toys. The toys were carefully chosen to be of equal attractiveness, size, and working parts.

Each child then played with the toys for 10 minutes while the observer either left the room or sat in a corner of the room and read. They were videotaped through a one way mirror. Children then were asked to verbally sex-type the toys in the same manner as their parents.

The results showed that the boys played with more masculine toys than neutral and feminine toys, and the girls played most with the neutral toys and gave equal time to the feminine and masculine choices. In addition, the children verbally sex-typed the toys with much less consensus than the adults. Younger children assigned fewer toys to the opposite sex than did the older children.

Parents expected their children to play with culturally defined sex-appropriate toys, yet they were not accurate in their predictions of the amount of actual play time spent with any of the gender groups. Fathers did not accurately predict their children's play. Mothers accurately predicted their daughter's play, but not their son's play, with feminine toys. The implications are such that parents probably provide

toys for their children that they would ordinarily not play with if given a choice.

Lamb and Roopnarine (1979) studied the influence of peers on preschool students sex-role behavior. Each of 16 boys and 16 girls, ages three to five, were individually observed for three separate ten-minute sessions during free play periods in a preschool setting. Children's behaviors were systematically monitored for incidences of sex-typed target activities established by previous research. Reinforcing and punishing peer responses to sex-typed behavior were recorded. Male-typed activities included building blocks, chasing and climbing, and playing a male character. Female-typed activities included kitchen play, dolls, and female character roles. Examples of peer reinforcement responses included praise, approval, and imitation. Examples of punishing behavior were criticism, abandonment of play, or expression of disapproval.

The authors found that positive reinforcements were used more often than punishments. Boys were more positively reinforced for male-typed behavior and girls were more positively reinforce for female-typed behavior. Boys, more than girls were the source of

reinforcement responses for the gender-appropriate behavior of both sexes. Positively reinforced behaviors continued longer than those that were punished. It was established that reinforcement and punishment had direct effect on the preschooler's behavior. They concluded that, "peer reinforcements and punishments may serve primarily to remind, not inform, other of these rules" (p.1220).

Serbin, et al.(1979) studied the effect of the presence of other children and its relationship to the play behavior of children. Thirty-six boys and 36 girls, ages three and a half to five, were observed playing with three masculine toys and three feminine toys (no neutral toys). During a three minute period they were observed through a one way mirror under three separate conditions: solitary, with a same-sex peer and with a peer of the opposite sex. Observations under these conditions went through three trials.

The results showed that the presence of a peer of the opposite sex most dramatically reduced the likelihood that a child would play with a toy deemed appropriate for the other sex. Because no neutral toys were used in the study it is unclear whether this was a

result of acceptance of stereotypical toy choices or the rejection of counterstereotypical toy choices.

However, there was a steady increase in the amount of time that a child played with sex-inappropriate toys over the trial period. This may be attributed to boredom with the toys by the third trial or it may suggest that given the opportunity children will eventually explore toys initially considered as inappropriate.

In 1979 Serbin and Connor reported their findings that a variety of factors can control sex-typed related behaviors in the classroom. The only description of their methods, in the report made at a Society for Research in Child Development meeting, was that the experiments were done over a four week period in half an hour sessions. In addition, they did state that their research focused mainly on "independent and dependent behavior, sex typing of play activities and toy preferences, and sex segregated play" (p.5).

They found that attention and praise, teacher modeling, labeling, and the location of the teacher in the classroom had a profound effect on the reduction and elimination of sex based stereotyping in the classroom. They concluded that this type of activity

by the teachers played a significant role in increasing the participation in activities for both boys and girls and the level of independent activity. Their experiments also resulted in a 50 percent reduction in sex segregated play.

Serbin and Connor also related that the rapid results were a function of immediate stimulus and reinforcement and that it was motivated by environmental cues. Thus, they predicted that the effects would probably be limited to the classroom situation and would predictably fail in the absence of the cues. They interpreted the findings as children's cognitive process of willingness to violate cultural norms due to teacher permission. They implied that in other situations that the children would rely on previously learned information regarding sex role stereotypes.

In accordance with previous findings (Bradbard & Endsley, 1983), Bigler and Liben (1990), agreed that lack of recall and distortion of counterstereotypical information play significant roles in the adoption of nonsexist behaviors and attitudes. They realized that simply introducing counterstereotypical ideas did not have much effect on children because they failed to

adequately process the information into their gender schema.

They tested 76 children from the ages of six to eleven and pretested them for gender stereotype knowledge. Two and a half weeks later, the control group, who were not part of the experimental intervention, were compared with a group of children who received treatment. The treatment, during one week of daily instruction for 20 minute periods, was to teach the children about the irrelevance of gender in occupational roles from a point of view that if people like a specific work related task and that if they had the ability to perform at the task that they were capable of doing the job.

The results, that those who entered the program as having a high degree of sex typing had similar results to those who entered the study with low levels of sex typing only if they were part of the experimental group. The control group did not present the same results. Thus, their conclusion was that a specific, active and direct approach to a nonsexist preschool curriculum would produce changes in attitude about occupational roles in adults, it did not have the same effect for child related activities.

Over a six month period, Koblinsky and Sugawara (1984) pre- and post-tested a group of 32 boys and 32 girls, ages three to five, with the Sex Role Learning Index (SERLI; Edelbrock & Sugawara, 1978) and the It Scale for Children (ITSC; Brown, 1957) for sex role discrimination and preference. They were divided into four groups with different sets of circumstances; a nonsexist curriculum/male teacher, nonsexist curriculum/female teacher, control curriculum/male teacher and control curriculum/female teacher.

The results showed that a nonsexist curriculum greatly reduced the level of sex stereotyping by comparison to the control groups. Furthermore, the male directed nonsexist group showed greater decreases on both measures of sex-role stereotypic knowledge and preference than did the female directed group. In addition, the male directed control group showed greater increases of stereotypic knowledge and preferences than did the female directed control group for children's activities.

Under the direction of a teacher of the opposite sex, children displayed less changes in preference for adult activities than those under the direction of the same-sex teacher. Female children taught by a female

teacher showed an increase in preference for feminine activities and girls taught by male teachers showed an increase in preference for adult masculine activities. This essentially held true for the boys, however, they displayed less of an increase in preference for adult female-typed activities than did the girls for male-typed activities by comparison.

Koblinsky and Sugawara stated:

> Male teachers are more salient sources of information about sex-role behavior than female teacher, but the male's impact will vary with specific curriculum goals (p. 365).

The reason for this outcome may be the result of the limited exposure to male-directed activities that children received prior to elementary school or it may be the result of a society that tends to value the adult male roles over that of female roles (Feinman, 1981).

Helen Moore Gilmore (1988), devised a handbook for parents, that also could quite easily be applied by teachers, that elaborates on ways to encourage the use of critical thinking skills in preschool age children. In addition, it specifically states four types of thinking in preschoolers that should be identified as critical thinking. The use of analogies helps young

children visualize relationships and comparative thinking is useful in teaching children to see similarities and differences. In addition, the handbook acknowledges the act of ordering information and finding a sequence or pattern and classifying or categorizing information are also critical thinking skills specifically applicable to young children.

Gilmore also suggests that concepts are not completely understood by children unless critical thinking skills have been applied at some point in the learning process. However, the author found it essential that teaching thinking skills must be done in a very relaxed and playful manner with young children and that it is particularly difficult for a preschool age child to reverse previously learned perceptions.

In summary, the research indicated that young children cognitively create a gender schema, an organizational framework of gender-based information and that children are more likely to seek and recall information appropriate to their own gender. In addition, it has been shown that the results of sex-bias are evident as competence deficiencies and that sex-role flexibility, in boys, is positively related to prosocial behavior.

The literature demonstrated that televised images are influential in children's sex-typed choices and that parents serve as more than role models, they serve as catalysts to their children's stereotypical sex-role behaviors and attitudes. In addition, it showed that parents do not always make accurate assumptions about their children's interests based on sex stereotypes. Furthermore, children's peers play a significant part in sex role development by both their responses to behavior and their mere presence.

In a classroom setting, the research illustrated that environmental control has a profound effect but that it does not extend beyond the setting. Directly teaching children that gender is irrelevant, in most cases, has been proven as an effective means of teaching children reasoning skills for their judgements. In addition, a nonsexist curriculum, particularly if administered by a man, will produce a reduction in stereotypical attitudes and behaviors.

Furthermore, because of the cognitive level of development of preschoolers it will be a difficult process for them to relearn their notions regarding gender. Yet, the most effective means to teach

children about conceptual ideas is through the use of critical thinking skills in a relaxed atmosphere.

Solution Strategy

The research clearly indicated that stereotypical sex role behaviors and attitudes were both present and had great effect on learning and social interaction. It also suggested that they are malleable and culturally defined. Most importantly, it explained the future significance of sex-role stereotypes among preschoolers on learning and life experiences. Clearly parents, teachers, peers, television and other media serve as facilitators of stereotypical sex role behaviors and attitudes.

Though the research offered few direct solutions for the problem, it identified and offered explanation for why the problem existed in a school which offered a nonsexist curriculum. It also explained the benefits of intervention for children of such a young age.

Other authors have given suggestions for methods to change stereotypical sex-role behaviors and attitudes, though they have not experimented under scientific conditions and offer no results, only expectations. The solution strategy was based on much

of what had been encountered by practicing educators rather the psychologists, using the psychological research as a basis of knowledge for what could and could not be expected.

In speaking with other professionals it was found that very few had even attempted to do something about this problem. In fact, many educators never considered strict adherence to sex-roles a problem until its effects were brought to their attention.

For classroom activities with the children, the restrictions that applied were such that the only times during the day that all of the students were participating in the same activity were during snack time and circle time. They had a group attention span of about 15 minutes. Thus, all organized solutions and interventions took place within 15 minutes prior to lunch time when some of the students went home.

Based on the research by Carter and Levy (1988) and Bigler and Liben (1990), it is clear that attempts to offer counterstereotypical information would be ineffective if it was not prefaced by a form of cognitive intervention. The use of introducing the irrelevance of gender in occupational roles (Bigler & Liben, 1990) and focusing on interests and skills was a

starting point of intervention in gender schematization. Group discussions were used on regular basis to be certain that contradictory concepts are overcome. It was most effective to present counterstereotypical information to the children after reasoning became part of the curriculum to reduce sex-role stereotyping. In addition the children needed information about how to recognize and resist gender-based bias.

The Anti-Bias Curriculum (Derman-Sparks et al., 1989) described several methods for educators of young children to use in order to reduce gender based stereotyping. The authors suggested that it is detrimental not to acknowledge the differences between boys and girls and men and women. They need to know exactly what the differences are between boys and girls. The differences must be discussed with the children and they should be taught "positive appropriate responses to these differences"(Sapin-Shevin, 1983 as cited by Derman-Sparks et al,1989:5).

The authors also suggested reading books about children encountering gender stereotyping and discussing how the children handled it or ways that they could have responded. Another recommendation that

was used was to have children find pictures of men and women and boys and girls doing different types of activities, having many different appearances, showing a variety of emotions and working at different jobs. Both of these ideas offered children a means of understanding that males and females can do, feel, and be both similar and different.

The director of the school informed the writer that the children are very interested in "fairness." Discussing the word and meaning of "stereotype" (Derman-Sparks, 1989) in relationship to fairness brought the conceptual nature of gender bias to a level appropriate for the students. It also gave them a framework of reference in order to recognize stereotyping when displayed in different sources of media. Discussing the subject of sex-role stereotyping and bias on a daily basis, even when it was only for five minutes, kept the concept in the children's minds.

Furthermore the children needed to develop the skills to resist bias on a cognitive level and needed to be able to practice using the resistance techniques. Fairy tales and other children's literature are often filled with gender bias and sex-based stereotypes (Howarth, 1989). They were used often in demonstrating

instances in which gender bias exists and as good catalysts to discussions about how situations could be made fair.

The children were used to creatively rewriting and acting out nursery rhymes. They certainly had the ability to do the same thing from a perspective of fairness to the sexes. Role playing was an active method in involving the children in critical thinking experiences about sex-role stereotypes.

Role playing was also used to teach the children the skills needed to resist stereotyping by their peers. In addition, music has always been a strong part of the general curriculum. Using songs that relate to the subject (Rodgers & Harnick, 1972) was also a part of the solution strategy to get children to talk about stereotypes.

Television is a extraordinary influence on children's view of social roles (Cobb, Stevens-Long & Goldstein, 1982). The writer has observed that commercials are often more bias than the programming itself, which generally offers quite false stereotypes on a regular basis (Crimmins, 1991). Commercials, due to the short time span, were excellent sources of stereotypes and allow children the time for discussion.

It also directly approached the powerful medium of television and offered immediate ways to respond to the televised image rather than processing the anti-bias information and having to apply it at home.

Parents may attempt to discuss televised images at home with their children. In fact, parents have expressed a desire to learn techniques to use to foster gender-based fairness in their children. If they want to create views of equality in their children and destroy the barriers of opportunity, most of them certainly needed training in recognizing their own gender-bias as well as helping their children recognize bias and develop flexible sex-role attitudes. Sex-role stereotyping comes from a variety of sources and could not be overcome by concentrating efforts solely to a school setting.

Time was a major constraint in working with parents. Many of them work during the day and have tremendous responsibilities in the evenings. For that reason, most of the information and training that was provided for parents was in the form of written information that could be read and perused at their leisure. It also allowed them to share the information with their spouses. The information that was provided

(Appendix G:111) included a check list for evaluating books for sexism (Michigan State Department of Education, 1984), and a reference list of books designed for parents and for preschool children in regards to sex-role stereotypes (Derman-Sparks et al., 1989; Michigan State Department of Education, 1984; Froschl & Sprung, 1983; Office of Education, 1979). The writer also compiled a list of things that could be done at home in order to reduce gender based stereotyping (Appendix H:113).

A training session was necessary to introduce ideas and for brainstorming and consciousness raising activities that were quite effective in sharing and learning about the experiences of others. The sources of the activities that were used have been implemented in previous instances. They included parents exploring their own bias and sex-role expectations for their children. In addition, they were taught ways to present relevant ideas to their children regarding sexism (Office of Education, 1979; Froschl & Sprung, 1983).

One parent, a social worker, who was very interested in the subject, offered a clever suggestion by describing what they do in their home. Both parents

do the same types of activities with their child (they both play sports with her and cook with her,etc.) It is probably not coincidence that their daughter is highly androgynous.

Though having a nonsexist curriculum has been proven to have an effect by comparison to control situations (Koblinsky & Sugawara, 1984), the school was already absent of all ostensible sexism. The idea of having male teachers provide a nonsexist curriculum indeed could be quite effective though it was not possible to hire new professional teachers in the middle of a school year, it was not economically feasible, there were very few male preschool teachers available, and the teachers at the school were superbly qualified and could easily implement an anti-bias curriculum effectively when given the proper strategies.

The teachers were privy to all of the research information and were offered strategies similar to what the parents received. In addition, the teacher's role in the absence of the writer, was to implement discussion ideas, book and poem readings, and music relating to the topic. Furthermore, the teachers was present at all times to intervene when sex-stereotyping

occurred and helped the children understand the contradictory nature of their ideas and statements (Derman-Sparks et al., 1989).

The teachers, the writer, parents and children worked cooperatively to alleviate gender-based stereotyping by the target group. A multi-dimensional approach was necessary because the problem stems from more than one source and was socially beyond the control of those participating in the study. The skills to resist sexism needed to originate from a variety of different sources in order for the children to effectively integrate the concepts that were presented.

CHAPTER 3

Method

The method of implementation occurred in three different forms. The first appealed specifically to the parents. The second was the writer's sessions with the children and the third was through daily lessons administered by the teachers.

Parental Training

During the initial meeting with the parents of the students participating in the study, the writer verbally offered parents suggestions of ways to respond to their children's stereotypical displays of behaviors and attitudes. The first meeting took place in the evening at the school approximately one month into the implementation. The teacher was also be present at the first meeting to answer questions and relieve anxiety.

A second meeting took place on a Saturday afternoon for those parents who could not attend in the evening. During both meetings two mothers of students in the target group attended. A total of four mothers and no fathers took an active role in interactive discussions about the subject of sex role stereotyping.

At both meetings the writer explained to the parents the reason for implementing the project, shared the conclusions of the research, and described what had occurred with their children in the classroom regarding this issue. Parents were asked to introspectively explore where they derived their individual notions of sex-roles and how it may have influenced their decisions and behaviors. The parents were given tasks adapted from and found in both Beginning Equal (Froschl & Sprung, 1983) and Together We Can (Office of Education, 1979). One of the tasks described an ambiguous situation in which the sex of the participants was not established. Then parents evaluated their assumptions of gender and discussed why those assumptions were made.

During the sessions, the parents evaluated their own use of language and establish word usage that is nonsexist by using an activity sheet of sexist words or phrases. Due to time constraints, they were asked to bring the information home and alter the language to meet a nonsexist criteria. The role of the media and toys were also discussed. In addition, the parents were asked to share their ideas, activities and information they received with their spouses. They

were also asked to take the opportunity to discuss it with their children.

Some of the specific concerns of parents were expressed by those who were parents of boys. The general fear was that if they allow their boy children to take part in activities that are normally meant for girls that they would become homosexual or that they will be ostracized by other children. These fears were subdued when it was explained that homosexuality is not a result of counterstereotypical sex-role opportunities and that developing "feminine" characteristics does not reduce "masculine" characteristics for boys. It was clearly explained to parents that the idea behind this project was to broaden the opportunities for their children and to have success and derive pleasure from a variety of different activities, not to alter their sexuality. The parents who expressed concern initially soon expressed that they felt positive about the training that they and their children had received.

From the beginning of implementation, articles from popular journals were sent home with their children for review. Other materials that related to the topic, such as reference lists and a checklist for

evaluating books, were offered to the parents (Appendix G:111).

Finally, at the end of the implementation period they received a Parental Response Survey (Appendix F:109) that provided the writer with a parental evaluation of the program and offered the parents a chance to reevaluate their understanding of the topic. Parents reported that their level of knowledge increased and they generally felt enriched through the program. However, one parent verbally reported to the writer that the child is now asking the father why he doesn't wash the dishes and that the parents felt that they did not have to justify their behaviors to their children. Upon speaking with the parent, the writer helped the parent realize that the child asked a valid question and deserved a valid answer (such as "Daddy doesn't wash the dishes because I like to cook and it is important to me that the dishes are done in the way I like them. It is not because he is a man.").

Writer's Role

Because of time constraints the writer was only available one time per week to present tasks and participate in activities with the students. During twelve separate sessions, once per week, the writer

introduced conceptual information to the students to increase their critical thinking skills involved with sex role stereotyping. The time allowed for the session varied, however most were approximately 15 minutes in length.

In the first session, the writer stimulated discussion about exactly how boys and girls are different. Anatomically correct dolls were used and the children justified their reasoning for determining gender on the basis of anything other than anatomy through expected responses, such as the color of the clothes the doll was wearing. The subject of hair length was brought up by one of the students but was quickly challenged by another child who announced that a male baseball coach had long hair. A discussion followed in which the teachers and the writer participated. It was a significant aid that both the female teachers have short hair.

During the second session, the writer discussed the occupational roles of men and women with the target group. The children were asked to assess whether a person is fit to work at specific jobs based on interests and skills, as opposed to gender. All of the children were willing to allow both men and women to

work in often stereotyped occupations, however one boy said that a woman could be a "fireman", but "she has to work on the computers." The student justified the response by saying that he has never seen a fireman who was a woman.

In the third week, the writer presented a puppet show using animal-typed puppets of unspecified gender. The puppets engaged in a conversation that depicted stereotypical phrases and actions. A discussion followed each of four brief interchanges about methods of resisting the stereotypes and the children's ideas were used to resolve the confrontations. When the children suggested a way to solve the problems, the puppets "acted out" their suggestions, and the children correctly determined whether the response was successful.

During the fourth session with the students, the writer introduced the word "stereotype" and its meaning. The writer presented the word by saying, "We've been talking a lot about boys and girls. I have a new word for you, it is 'stereotype'(show the written word). A stereotype is an unfair thing that people think that a person can only act one way just because

the person's a boy or a girl, instead of having choices."

Children were asked if they have ever encountered gender-based stereotyping. Some children correctly identified stereotypes, such as "Mom has to stay home with the kids, while Dad gets the car washed." Once that definition was accepted as a stereotype the children made assumptions in accordance with the specific example. It became clear during the session that many children had trouble differentiating between a stereotype and anything that is unfair. Due to time constraints it was not possible for the writer to clarify the issue within the allotted amount of time.

However, the following day the teacher carried out an exercise that helped in clarifying the issue. The children were asked to distinguish between "stereotypes" and "true." As and example, the children determined that it is true that "boys don't have vaginas" and it is a stereotype that "boys can't buy diamonds." The students were asked to express some of their own ideas of stereotypes and were better able to distinguish between stereotypes and general unfairness following the exercise.

During the fifth week, common gender-based stereotypes were examined and illustrated by the writer. Questions were asked to stimulate discussion, such as "What will happen if a boy needs to cry, and someone calls him a 'sissy'?"

Issues that were tangible, such as toys, were most effective in involving the children in discussion and personalizing the topic. The children were best able to discuss how they would deal with a child telling them that they could not play with the doll because it is for girls, rather than someone calling them a hurtful name. In most cases, the students said that they think that they could play with any toy and they could tell another child, "Yes, I can."

As of the sixth session, the children had developed a working knowledge of gender-based bias. During the time that the writer was present the children were asked to use their reasoning skills to discover nonsexist language for terms that usually specify gender (i.e. mailman, fireman, housewife). The writer used the example of "mailman" by talking about what a "mailman" actually does and then asked, "What if the mailman was a woman?" A student responded "we could call her a mailwoman." The writer's goal was to

have the children associate the task with the title (i.e.mail carrier). However, in most examples the children were quite satisfied with nonsexist terms (i.e. mailperson, fireperson, policeperson).

The writer present a few different distressing confrontations caused by sex-role stereotypes during the seventh week of implementation. The children participated in role playing in which they attempted to act out the situations. The rest of the class was called upon to find solutions to the problem. On that particular day the children were resistant to "performing" in front of the class. Only a few children were willing to participate, yet they were able to find ways to involve both boys and girls in the stereotypical activities presented to them. This method was particularly difficult for the group of target students.

The writer altered the plans for role playing by asking volunteer students to act out different activities (climbing a tree, playing baseball, etc) as if they were a boy and as if they were a girl. They concluded that boys and girls do not do these activities differently, although some students were able to find differences in the "performances" when

there were none. One student suggested that when the child pretended to bat a baseball, that it went farther when it was the boy. The child was asked to justify the comment and said that it "just looked that way."

During the eighth week, the writer read Zolotow's William's Doll (1972) and the children listened to song version of the same title (Rodgers & Harnick,1972). The writer then lead a discussion about peer name calling. The discussion concentrated on how it hurts people's feelings to be called mean names and expanded into how it is unfair to say that some toys are just for girls or just for boys.

The children discussed the sex-typed labeling of toys and its fairness and most of the children strongly articulated that they enjoyed playing with counterstereotypical toys. Interestingly, a few boys expressed how the enjoy playing with "girl toys" but they would not actually own them.

Children were shown a videotape, made by the writer, of commonly seen commercials for toys and other goods marketed to children, three commercials for "boy toys" and three for girls. After each commercial, they were asked if they thought the toys were for boys or girls. When the class determined the gender of the

target market for the advertisers, the opposite gender was asked how they feel about the commercial. In all the circumstances the children said they felt "sad," or "mad."

The target group was then asked which commercial upset them the most and it was decided that they would take a vote when they returned after the spring vacation. One student suggested that the class could write a letter to the company. The students were instructed to pay attention to the same types of bias when watching television at home. This occurred during the ninth week.

Upon return from the spring vacation, many of the children had seen commercials that they perceived and in fact were biased toward one gender. They wrote a letter to the company and received a response prior to the conclusion of the practicum implementation. In addition, four parents verbally expressed to the writer that their children now watch television commercials critically.

During the tenth session, the writer another version of read of Disney's Cinderella as it was established that all the students knew the commonly known version. The new version was entitled "Another

Cinderella" (Stiles, 1987). It described the Cinderella story in a modern context using nonsexist language and portrayed the characters in nonstereotypical ways. In particular, the lead character saves herself, rather than being rescued by the prince. The children were asked to compare the two versions and distinguish the differences in relationship to sex roles. The target group agreed that the new version was "nicer."

In addition, a different form of stereotyping was discussed (step-families) and it was explained that there are other variations of stereotypes. This did not confuse the issue of gender-based stereotyping. Instead it clarified to the students that a stereotype is not just unfair, it is what is depicted often and is not always true.

During the eleventh week, the writer discussed Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and the gender-based stereotypes depicted in the story. Through brainstorming the children verbally rewrote the story to eliminate any sex-role stereotypes. The writer initiated the new version by asking the students if it was better to be "smart" or "beautiful." The children's response was "smart," so Snow White became

the "smartest" in the land. The students continued and had Snow White teach the dwarfs how to cook and clean for themselves and she went to the mines to help them find gold. They determined that a smart person would never eat an apple from a witch, so she threw it away. When they were coming home from work one day they saw the woodcutter lying on the ground after he had fallen off of his horse. They nursed him to health and he and Snow White fell in love.

The children then acted out the rewritten story. During the videotaping, the person who played Snow White unexpectedly asked the woodcutter to marry her. The videotape of their new "play" will possibly be shown at an open house.

The twelfth week was a culmination of all that had been introduced and discussed. The writer lead a discussion about stereotypes, peers, television, books, occupational roles, emotions, and toys. Fairness was the cohesive factor. A review took place and the children were asked to use the information not only in school, but in their homes and with other friends, as well.

Teacher's Role

The teacher was present at all of the sessions with the students. The teacher knows the students well and helped the writer in developing terminology that was appropriate for the children's developmental levels. Beyond that, the teacher introduced the topic of sex-role stereotyping on a daily basis with the children for periods of at least five minutes on the days that the writer was not present.

For the four remaining days of the week, when the writer was not present, the teacher initially implemented four different methods of stimulating discussion about gender-based stereotypes. Books and songs were often used to initiate discussions and to stimulate critical thinking skills in relationship to the topic. Furthermore, some variations of role playing were used to incorporate the theme of sex-role stereotypes. The specifics of which books, songs and role play activities were to be used was entirely the decision of the teacher and was recorded on a daily basis.

Primarily, the teacher based the daily activities on what had been discussed with the students and the writer. Because preschool age children generally need

new concepts repeated in order to develop full understanding, the teacher used the days between the writer's sessions for follow-up activities and discussions. The time set aside for discussion of sex-role stereotypes was spent elaborating on new ideas and clarifying misconceptions. Discussions were often introduced with a question, such as "What do you want to be when you grow up? Would you want to be something different if you were a boy/girl?"

During many of the discussions, the target group was asked to relate the information to their own lives. For instance, after the children listened to the song "It's All Right to Cry" (Hall,1972), they engaged in a discussion about whether they have ever cried and if they have ever seen their parents cry. All of the children agreed that everybody cries and most said that they have seen their fathers cry, which counteracted the stereotype that "big boys don't cry."

In addition, children participated in weekly sessions of finding pictures of boys and girls and men and women participating in a variety of activities and occupations, displaying a variety of emotions, and manners of dress. This resulted in a wonderful source for discussion as well as a 51-page book that presently

resides in the book corner for the children to review during center time. The teachers also intervened or mediated, when necessary, in conflictual incidences between students regarding gender stereotypes. They helped the children try to understand the problem and find a solution.

Results of behavior and/or attitude changes were reported by the teacher to the writer on a daily basis. In addition, the activities that took place in absence of the writer were also recorded daily. The lists of books, songs, and any other materials that were employed were noted. The teacher and the writer met weekly to review the plans for implementation and devised any changes that needed to be made on the basis of the review.

The only significant changes that took place occurred when the writer and the teacher reevaluated the program after six weeks of implementation. The writer and the teacher agreed that the amount of time devoted to the topic was beginning to overload the students and that the activities and discussions became unnecessarily repetitive. The teacher felt that the children had exhausted all the available resources for cutting out pictures of the different genders

participating in varying activities and that the activity had reached its potential. In addition, the teacher commented that role playing was a particularly difficult, and thus ineffective, means of teaching this target group of students. Thus, for the remaining six weeks of implementation those activities were halted and discussions and books, solely and specifically, aimed at the reduction of sex role stereotypes were reduced to two times per week in addition to the writer's presentations.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Evaluation of children's gender-based stereotypical behaviors were assessed within one week prior to implementation, during the seventh week of implementation and within one week after implementation. Records were kept by writer observation following the Guidelines for Collecting Anecdotal Evidence (Appendix A:93).

The writer observed the students for a period of one and a half hours a day, forty-five minutes of center activities and forty-five minutes of playground activities, for two days during a one week time span. This format was constant for the initial, mid-course, and post-implementation observations. Using anecdotal notes, behaviors, actions and comments were quantified in terms of incidences of sex-segregation, stereotypical comments, responses to stereotypical comments and stereotypical and counterstereotypical behaviors and actions.

During the first observation there were five incidences of sex segregation. During the second and

third observations, the incidences fell to three and rose to five, respectively. Thus, there was little change in the level of sex segregated play that could be considered anything other than random. Yet, the number of times a child made a stereotypical comment rose from twice to four times during the second observation period and by the third observation period only one stereotypical comment was noted.

In direct relationship to the reduction in the level of stereotypical comments was the increase in responses to stereotypical notions. During the initial observation, only one response or challenge to stereotypes was noted. However, the number of incidences of responses gradually increased to two by the second observation and to three by the third. These results suggest that the target group as a whole has been made aware of sex-role stereotypes and most importantly, they have developed confidence in their skills to resist stereotyping in peer play.

Stereotypical behaviors and actions decreased almost fifty percent from the initial level, measured during the first observational period, of 13 incidences to a final level of seven incidences, measured during the third observational period. The mid-course

observation showed five incidences of stereotypical behavior, thus demonstrating that a significant change occurred during the first six weeks of implementation. In addition, counterstereotypical behaviors increased slightly from four incidences during the first two observations to six during the final observation. This can be interpreted to mean that not only did the children learn that they are not bound to specific male or female behavior, but they are also able to experiment with behaviors that they previously perceived as exclusively for the other gender.

In order to assess the level of sex role flexibility and knowledge, the target group was tested one week prior to and within one week after implementation with the Sex Role Learning Index (SERLI; Edelbrock & Sugawara, 1978; Appendix E:105). The SERLI measured the level of awareness of sex-role stereotypes, sex-role preference, and the level of desire to adhere to one's own gender schema. The results were individually compared for changes in the flexibility and knowledge of sex roles.

The SERLI is an individually administered psychological evaluation tool specifically designed to measure the level of cognitive integration of sex role

stereotypes in young children. The SERLI is comprised of three separate but dependent sections. In the first section the children were asked to assign the use of specific objects, such as an iron or hammer, to one gender or both and then they were asked to reassign the objects they labeled for both to one gender. They were then shown pictures of children using the objects during an appropriate activity and they ranked their order of preference for participating in each activity. In the third section they similarly ranked their preferences except adults were depicted in the pictures. In all of the testing the pictures with people represented the child's own gender.

In scoring, the individual responses given during the first portion of the test were compared with the second and third sections of the SERLI to arrive at a score that could comparatively rate the level of awareness of sex role stereotypes in society. In addition, it quantitatively measured the individual need to adhere to socially derived stereotypes as well as the desire to adhere to their own notion of sex role behavior.

It is fair to assume that any child with a strong sense of gender identity would tend to gravitate

towards activities and experiences consistent with their own individual ideas of their own sex role. It is a desirable quality to have a strong sense of gender identity. People with confused gender identity have a very difficult time adjusting to and being accepted by American society. The results show that the most evident change in the majority of the class was in sex role confirmation, in which children were tested to see the level of desire they had to adhere to their own gender schema. Sixty percent of the target group increased the level of sex role confirmation (SRC) to the highest attainable score for either children or adults or both. This represents a change ranging from 19.4 percent to 105 percent for each individual student who demonstrated an increase.

Because of the high level of response on the first choice portion of the SERLI towards assigning the objects to both boys and girls, the rise in SRC scores reflected the neutrality assigned to the objects. So the children apparently did not necessarily have a stronger desire to adhere to society's sex-role expectations. They simply increased the chances of a higher score because they assigned a greater number of object to both genders. However, that also might

reflect that they are able to visualize themselves doing far more than they had previously perceived possible. The target group is now more flexible in their sex role conceptions.

The change in sex role preference (SRP) was less evident than in sex role confirmation, yet still significant. Forty percent of the students demonstrated a change of more that 40 percent in ranking their own sex role preference. The changes occurred in both direct ns, more or less preference for participating in sex specific stereotypical activities. However, in three of the four students that showed distinct change, their SRP scores gravitated more toward neutral demonstrating that the goal of viewing more activities as gender neutral has been achieved and incorporated into their self concepts.

The sex role discrimination (SRD) portion of the testing, which measures the level of awareness of sex role expectancy, showed little significant change after implementation, as expected. Only three students had scores that changed by 30 percent or more regarding sex role awareness. Though that number appears to be high, considering basic sex role knowledge is incorporated at a very young age, half of the scores represent

increased levels of sex role discrimination and half represent decreased levels. This balance suggests that as a whole the target group showed an insignificant change in sex role awareness, and as individuals the changes were relatively minor and varied. However, it is clearly not detrimental for young children to be aware of societal sex role expectations. In fact, in learning about stereotypes the children had to be aware of what the specific sex role stereotypes are in American society in order for them to examine their own relationship to the bias.

The children were tested with the Sex-Typed Toy Picture Test (Appendix B:95) approximately one month prior to implementation. Within one week after implementation was completed the children were retested for change in their assignment of toys previously assigned to only one sex to neutral. Nine out of the ten children tested reassigned at least 25 percent of the toys that they had previously assigned male or female to both boys and girls. The average rate of change for the entire target group showed 38 percent of the possible twelve items were reassigned to neutral when previously labeled male or female.

These results are quite astounding when it is taken into consideration that all of the children had labeled at least two toys neutral in pretesting. It must also be taken into consideration that the writer administered the testing and the children had a tendency to associate neutral gender role stereotypes with the writer. The results may have shown a less significant level of change had the testing been administered by a third party. However, the results clearly suggest a strong positive change in attitude by all of the target group demonstrating that they are less likely to limit the toy options available to them and others based on gender.

Parents assessed their own knowledge and success in reducing sex role stereotypes in their own children on a Parental Response Survey (Appendix F:109) at the end of the implementation period. Parents were asked to rate the level of increased knowledge regarding the topic on a scale of one to ten, ten equaling 100 percent. Based on the parental response there was a 50 percent mean increase in knowledge and understanding of gender-based stereotyping. Ninety percent of the parents claimed their knowledge increased by more than 25 percent.

Responses to the other questions asked on the survey were equally encouraging. All of the parents claimed that their children increased their awareness of sex role stereotypes and two of the parents elaborated to describe that the increase was exceptional. In addition, all of the parents reported that their children demonstrated an increase in counterstereotypical behaviors and attitudes and/or a decrease in stereotypical behaviors and attitudes. One set of parents reported that their daughter, who would always wear dresses, was now wearing shorts to school. Additionally the teacher noted that the child was no longer playing the "prissy" role she previously played when wearing only dresses. Furthermore, all of the parents responded that they would like to see the program implemented throughout the school and one parent suggested that it should be introduced in the public school system as well.

Teachers and/or parents attested that each child has learned the meaning of the word "stereotype" by either a teacher's report that the child had used the word correctly during the implementation period or by response to the Parental Response Survey following the allotted time of the study (Appendix F:109). According

to the results of the Parental Response Survey, every student in the study used the word "stereotype" correctly at some point during the three months of study.

In addition, both the writer and the teacher observed all of the children also using the word correctly in the school setting. The use of the correct language in the home environment demonstrated greater success than if the children were to have contained their skills to the classroom. It showed that the children took the information and skills that they received in the classroom and applied it to their lives at home.

Thus, the critical thinking skills and attitudinal changes were expanded beyond simple awareness towards cognitive integration. It must also be stated that both the teacher and the writer, as well as one parent, heard a small number of the students using the word "stereotype" incorrectly during the course of implementation. Though this was not the case at the completion of the study, it must be emphasized that in teaching young children about abstract concepts regarding gender roles the teacher must be highly conscious of the level of understanding for each

individual student in order to abruptly redirect any misconceptions.

Records were kept by the writer in relationship to the children's exhibition of skills and reasoning abilities to resist gender bias. All displays of these actions were noted during the twelve week implementation period through the use of an audio tape recorder. In addition, the teacher made notes of similar occurrences in the absence of the writer. All of the children in the target group exhibited reasoning skills and abilities regarding gender role stereotypes at least one time. One prime example took place, in the absence of the writer but in the presence of the teacher, on a field trip to a supermarket distribution warehouse. The class was shown a film of the work that is done in the facility and during the question and answer period that followed one student asked the presenter why there were no women truck drivers working in the warehouse.

Other examples include when one male student in the target group was dictating a story during center time and corrected himself when he initially stated "The man who was driving the boat...," then restated, "the man or lady driving the boat." And skills of

resisting stereotypes during peer interaction were demonstrated when a male student tried to convince other male members of the group that the activity they created was only for boys and girls could not participate because there were "dragons and swords." One of the male participants insisted that a female student could join in the play.

The results of the implementation of this project clearly illustrate that much more can be done in order to reduce gender bias and the level of sex role stereotyping than simply creating a nonsexist atmosphere in the classroom. This overt method that was used to specifically to define and redefine gender roles for preschoolers significantly changed not only the attitudes, but the behaviors of the members of the target group.

It is essential in understanding the results of this project that in redefining gender roles the teachers and the writer specifically planned to teach the children that stereotypes are unfair, limit options, and exclude people. In addition, it is necessary to understand that counterstereotypical behaviors and attitudes were not encouraged, rather the aim of assigning neutrality to all activities and

emotions was stressed. Furthermore, in attempting to reduce the level of detrimental stereotypical sex role behaviors it was consistently and informally reinforced that certain behaviors are unacceptable, gender was not directly articulated to the students as an issue in correcting negative behavior.

Essentially, the children were not aware that they were being observed for specific behavioral changes, nor did they have any knowledge that there were any goals to this program. It is to be assumed, due to these circumstances that the results represent true modification rather than an appeal by students to be rewarded.

With this knowledge, it is possible to objectively view the results as overwhelmingly successful. Though there was no change in sex-segregated play, there were both stereotypical and counterstereotypical behavioral changes at school and at home. Additionally, peer interaction was influenced as shown by the way the children resisted stereotyping by others.

Attitudinally, the children widened their options and goals for themselves and others as shown by the Sex-Typed Picture Test and the SERLI. They used skills of resistance by challenging their peers who

demonstrated gender bias. And they used their knowledge and new found understanding in situations in which they were totally unprovoked or "off the subject."

Parents also reported that their increased level of awareness and understanding of the problems that stem from sex role stereotyping has been very helpful. Furthermore, they reported that their children now have the language and other skills to discuss this topic within the family. Overall, by both parents and teachers the project well received and perceived as beneficial.

The quantitative analysis clearly showed many positive changes that extended beyond the expectations of the writer. Yet, the real results are best understood through the anecdotal evidence collected throughout the duration of implementation, as they are examples of the essence of the goal of this practicum.

Children regularly demonstrated higher level critical thinking skills regarding the subject. They used their minds and experiences to relate the classroom experiences to their lives and perceptions. They have effectively challenged their own misconceptions and those of others and they repeatedly

searched for alternatives to conventional thinking. Through this project children were not only able set their own objectives, they were able to widen the range of goals they perceived as possible. The project has had an effect that extends beyond quantitative analysis, it has had a positive, expansive effect that can be seen in the children's daily lives.

CHAPTER 5

Recommendations

The success of this practicum has many implications for further use and use in other school settings. The school setting of this practicum is unique in that the director and teachers had already established a nonsexist classroom setting. Facilities that have not attempted to reduce the level of sex-role stereotyping will have the extra task of assessing changes that need to be made in order to establish a nonsexist classroom and providing teacher training.

Beyond those distinctions, the activities and critical thinking skills used in this study can be modified for use in classrooms with older students or pertaining to other varieties of stereotypes, such as race and religion, depending on the make up of the student body.

Based on the successful outcome of the program, it will be extended to the rest of the school. The intensity of the program will be reduced because results will be judged over a longer period of time.

The results may also be studied for indications of success and reproduced for dissemination into preschools in the community. The resources used in this project are applicable to all other preschool settings and are listed as references and in the bibliography. Further study could be done with primary students as well as adolescents.

Additionally, the information obtained from this practicum was disseminated to the outside community through a workshop directed by the writer to the South Palm Beach County chapter of the National Organization for Women during the course of implementation. A similar workshop in nonsexist childrearing for parents is scheduled to be presented at The Better Bear, a children's store in Boca Raton, Florida, following the completion of the practicum project.

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Appendices

Appendix A

GUIDELINES FOR COLLECTING ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE

GUIDELINES FOR COLLECTING ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE

Types of behaviors to make notes of should they occur:

1. Sex-segregation: Incidences in which all boys or all girls are involved in an activity with more than one person.

2. Stereotypical comments: a spoken phrase or sentence, etc. that suggests that the child limits the choices for a specific gender.

3. Responses to stereotypical comments: any type of action, verbal or otherwise, that challenges gender-based stereotypical notions.

4. Stereotypical behaviors/actions: described below

5. Counterstereotypical behaviors/actions: any behavior or action that is generally exclusively associated with the other gender.

-male stereotyped behaviors may be classified as such: aggressive, independent, primarily with other males, sex-typing of play activities and toys

-female stereotyped behavior may be classified as such: passive, dependent, primarily with other females, sex-typing of play activities and toys

Any behaviors varying from those specified above that may still be considered gender-based must be specifically described.

*Notes of children involved, the actual occurrence, and other mitigating factors, such as time of day or activity involved should be directly stated.

Appendix B

SEX-TYPED TOY PICTURE TEST

SEX-TYPED TOY PICTURE TEST

MALE

---

football

lawn mower

fire engine

police car

NEUTRAL

---

toy soldier doll

crayons

books

maze

FEMALE

---

doll

shopping

doll house

kitchen supplies

Appendix C

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONNAIRE

CHILD'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Children's Questionnaire on Gender Identity, Gender Constancy, and Gender Role

1. Are you, (name), a boy or a girl?

2. Can you ever be a (opposite of the answer given in #1)?

3. When you grow up will you be a man or a women?

4. Are there special things you can do just because you are a (answer given in #1)?

5. Are there special things you can not do just because you are a (answer given in #1)?

6. Can a woman be a doctor?

7. Can a man be a doctor?

8. Can a woman be a teacher?

9. Can a man be a teacher?

10. Can a woman be a fire fighter?

11. Can a man be a fire fighter?

12. What happens if a girl plays with a toy for boys?

13. What happens if a boy plays with a toy for girls?

14. Are women powerful?

15. Can a man be a ballet dancer?

16. Should men or women wash the dishes?

17. Should men or women do laundry?

18. Do men or women cook meals (food)?

19. Should men or women vacuum the floors?

20. Are men loving?

21. Are girls good at sports?

22. Are boys allowed to cry?

23. Can a man be a babysitter?

24. Can women be truck drivers?

25. Are boys supposed to play house?

26. Are girls supposed to play basketball?

27. Should men or women do most of the cleaning?

28. Can a woman be a pilot?

29. Can a man be a pilot?

30. How do the other girls/boys treat you when you cannot make up your mind?

31. How do the other girls/boys treat you when you take control of a game?

Appendix D

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of child_____

Sex- M / F Birthdate / /

Siblings- Sex Age

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

Who is the primary caretaker of your child? mother / father / both / other (male or female)?

Are parents married/ divorced/ single/ widowed?

Which parent is the child living with?

Please identify other living arrangements (i.e. joint custody)

How many hours per week of commercial/cable television does your child watch?_____

How many minutes per day does your child spend reading or being read to?_____

Does your child play with toys associated with the opposite sex? (i.e. boys playing with dolls, girls playing with weapons)_____
If yes, how often? everyday / a few days a week / occasionally / rarely
What types of toys?_____

If there is more than one male or female adult living in the home please fill out a form for all adults and identify the relationship to the child

Male adult in the household

Occupation_____

Hours per week away from home/child_____

Household responsibilities(i.e. garbage, cooking, etc.)_____
_____
_____

Hobbies_____

Female adult in the household

Occupation_____

Hours per week away from home/child_____

Household responsibilities(i.e. garbage, cooking, etc.)_____
_____
_____

Hobbies_____

Would you consider your child's actions and attitudes appropriate for his or her gender?

Do you find it important that your child adhere to certain stereotypes associated with gender?_____
If yes, which ones?

Do you find it important that your child not adhere to certain stereotypes associated with gender?_____
If yes, which ones?

Are you disturbed by non-traditional gender role behavior and attitudes expressed by your child?_____
Which behaviors?

Are you disturbed by the traditional gender role behavior and attitudes expressed by your child?_____
Which behaviors?

What have you done in order to eliminate gender-based stereotypical attitudes in your child? Have your attempts been successful?

Do you think your child would benefit from a program that worked at eliminating gender based stereotypes?_____
Would it help self concept?____self-esteem?_____
allow your child more learning experiences?_____
have better understanding of others?_____
Other? please explain

Appendix E

THE SEX ROLE LEARNING INDEX

Appendix F

PARENTAL RESPONSE SURVEY

PARENTAL RESPONSE SURVEY

1. How would you rate the increase in the level of knowledge you have gained in regards to children's sex-role stereotyping? Use a scale of 1-10, 10=100percent_____

2. Has you child's level of awareness of sex-role stereotypes increased?

3. Has your child demonstrated any reduction in stereotypical behaviors and/or attitudes? Please describe

4. Has your child demonstrated any increase in non-stereotypical behaviors and/or attitudes? Please describe

5. Have you observed your child correctly using the word "stereotype" at any time since this program began?

6. Has the information that has been provided to you been helpful?

7. Would you like to see this program implemented throughout the school?

Comments:

Please return this survey by May 21. And thanks again for your time and interest.

Sincerely,

Jill Glickman

Appendix G

ARTICLES FOR PARENTS

Developmental Psychology
1978, Vol. 14, No. 6, 614-623

Acquisition of Sex-Typed Preferences in Preschool-Aged Children

CRAIG EDELBROCK
National Institute of Mental Health
Bethesda, Maryland

ALAN I. SUGAWARA
Oregon State University

A total of 119 preschool-aged children were assessed with the Sex Role Learning Index (SERLI), a picture-choice instrument designed to compare children's preferences to both sex role stereotypes and each child's conception of what is sex appropriate. Boys showed higher masculine preferences in the section depicting child figures than in the section depicting adult figures, while girls showed more feminine preferences in the adult figures than child figures section. Boys were more masculine in their preferences than girls were feminine in the child figures section, but not in the adult figures section. Girls were also found to adhere more to their own conceptions of what is sex appropriate than to sex role stereotypes in the child figures section. Boys' scores in the adult figures section correlated significantly with mental age ($p < .05$), and IQ ($p < .01$), while girls scores in the child figures section correlated with chronological age ($p < .01$). Boys' scores on the SERLI were significantly correlated ($p < .05$) with scores on Brown's It Scale for Children, but girls' scores were not.

Much of the research on sex role acquisition in early childhood has focused on the concept of sex role preference (SRP), which has been defined as the desire to adhere to cultural standards regarding appropriate masculine and feminine behavior (Biller, 1968; Brown, 1956b). Several techniques have been used to assess SRP in young children, but the most commonly used measures have required the child to choose, from limited sets of sex-stereotyped drawings or pictures, items that the child would like best to do, play with, or be (Brown, 1956a; DeLucia, 1963; Fauls & Smith, 1956; Rabban, 1950). The child's choices have been scored according to adult sex role stereotypes to produce a "masculine" or "feminine" SRP score. The consensus of research, predominantly with Brown's (1956a) It Scale for Children (ITSC), has been that by 3 years of age boys show a dominant preference for the masculine role, while girls show less preference for the feminine role and are more variable in their choices. In addition, boys increase in their preference for the masculine role with age, while girls appear to reach a maximum in preference for the feminine role at about age 4, then maintain that level or tend toward more masculine choices until early adolescence (Brown, 1956b, 195?; Hartup & Zook, 1960; Thompson & McCandless, 1970).

This research has suffered from conceptual and methodological inadequacies that may have created a very misleading picture

A portion of this research was included in a dissertation submitted by the first author to the Graduate School of Oregon State University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the PhD degree. This research was supported in part by a General Foods Fund Fellowship to the first author. Thomas M. Achenbach, Charles Halverson, and Howard Moss made valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper. The authors are indebted to the teachers, parents, and staff of Orchard Street and Park Terrace preschools, Treehouse Learning Center, and Corvallis Community Day Care Center, Corvallis, Oregon. Susan Deeds, Sally Gentry Koblinsky, Beth Granberg, and Cathy Servoss assisted in data collection. Requests for reprints should be sent to Craig Edelbrock, Laboratory of Developmental Psychology, Building 15K, National Institute of Mental Health, Bethesda, Maryland 20014.

In the public domain

Edelbrock, C. & A.I. Sugawara. "Acquisition of Sex-Typed Preferences in Prescool-Aged Children." Developmental Psychology 1978,14,614-623.

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of the process through wh
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SRP is dependent upon the
the child is perfectly aware
and feminine stereotypes of
in that these stereotypes are
the intentions behind the
This assumption, however,
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awareness of sex role ste
emerging. Hence, a child
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changes involve a move
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The instruments used to
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LAN I. SUGAWARA
)regon State University

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of the process through which children develop sex-typed preferences. The concept of SRP is dependent upon the assumption that the child is perfectly aware of the masculine and feminine stereotypes of the test stimuli, in that these stereotypes are used to evaluate the intentions behind the child's choices. This assumption, however, is not likely to be valid for young children because their awareness of sex role stereotypes is just emerging. Hence, a child might choose an item that he or she perceives as being sex appropriate but that is stereotyped as being sex inappropriate. Scoring based on adult standards would thus result in an erroneous measure of the child's intention. Furthermore, the concept of SRP implies adherence to exclusively masculine or feminine sex role standards. This approach cannot adequately deal with preferences for items that the child might perceive as being appropriate for both sexes. It seems unlikely, therefore, that measures of SRP will be sensitive to the impact of changes in sex roles on the developing child, since most of these changes involve a move toward more equalitarian sex role standards.

The instruments used to measure SRP in young children have also been widely criticized (Reed & Asbjornsen, 1968; Schell & Silber, 1968; Thompson & McCandless, 1970). Typical scoring systems have used arbitrary weights to score choices of the various items. In the ITSC, for example, the choice of a masculine toy in one section is given 1 point, while the choice of the masculine figure in another section is given 12 points, although it does not represent 12 times more "masculine" preference. In addition, since the items are usually presented in small subsets, the overall order of the child's choices, which may reveal information regarding relative preferences, is ignored, and each choice is open to biases due to comparisons with a few other items. Most measures have also depicted only a limited range of children's play activities and toys and have not represented adult figures and roles, although this distinction has theoretical importance. The use of the "ambiguous" It figure in the ITSC is also controversial, and it is unclear whether masculine cues in the It figure bias ITSC scores toward more masculine preferences (Brown, 1962; Endsley, 1968; Lansky & McKay, 1963; Sher & Lansky, 1965; Schell & Silber, 1968; Thompson & McCandless, 1970).

The purpose of this research was to develop a measure of early sex role acquisition that would overcome some of the conceptual and methodological problems of previous instruments. Specifically, the goals in the development of the Sex Role Learning Index (SERLI) were to (a) compare children's preferences to both sex role stereotypes and each child's conception of what is sex appropriate, (b) distinguish between child and adult figures participating in the activities and roles depicted in the test items, and (c) use a probabilistic scoring system based on the order of the child's choices.

Several studies were then undertaken to assess the adequacy of the SERLI as an alternative conceptual and methodological approach to assessing sex role acquisition in preschool-aged children. The age range from 3 to 5 years is of particular interest because previous research has shown it to be a dynamic period for sex role acquisition, characterized by a rapid increase in the child's awareness of sex roles and the emergence of distinct sex-typed preferences (Brown, 1956b, 1957; Hartup & Zook, 1960; Thompson & McCandless, 1970).

Method

Development of the SERLI[1]

Conceptual framework. The SERLI was designed to measure the following three concepts:

1. Sex role discrimination (SRD). SRD refers to the child's awareness of sex role stereotypes (Schell & Silber, 1968) and is operationally defined in the SERLI as the degree to which the child's classification of items depicting various objects agrees with sex role stereotypes of those items.

2. Sex role preference (SRP). SRP has been defined as the desire to adhere to sex role stereotypes regarding appropriate masculine and feminine behavior (Biller, 1968; Brown, 1956b). In the SERLI, a child's SRP score is based on the order in which the child chooses items stereotyped as being appropriate for the child's sex.

[1] The SERLI and a manual including a description of its development, administration procedures, item analyses, and scoring tables are available from the first author.

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3. Sex role Confirmation (SRC). SRC is defined as the desire to adhere to one's own conceptions of what is sex appropriate. SRC was designed to assess the degree to which the child's preferential choices "confirm" or agree with his or her own conception of what is sex-appropriate, rather than cultural stereotypes as in the case of SRP. The scoring of SRC is based on the order in which the child chooses the items that the child has defined as being sex appropriate, including those items defined as being appropriate for both sexes.

Content. Separate SERLI forms have been developed for boys and girls. Each form contains 30 black-and-white line drawings, organized into three sections: (a) the child figures section, (b) the adult figures section, and (c) the objects section. The items in the two forms are identical, except that the boys' form depicts only male figures engaged in the various activities and roles, while the girls' form depicts female figures. This was done to minimize social-desirability influences by offering the child examples of same-sexed figures participating in both the masculine and feminine stereotyped activities and roles.

The child and adult figures sections contain 10 items each, half stereotyped as masculine and half as feminine. The Objects section contains 20 drawings of objects representing the activities and roles in the child and adult figures sections (see Table 1).

The SERLI was designed to allow the individual child the opportunity to specify any particular item as being appropriate for both sexes and to score children's preferences according to both the child's point of view and cultural sex role stereotypes. Hence, the intention was not to include "neutral" items, but rather to select items that become progressively stereotyped in early childhood. The items were chosen on the basis of content analyses of previous measures of sex role acquisition, as well as pilot studies with an initial pool of 200 items. Items were selected that offered a range of activities and roles that are common in children's play constructions and stories and that children view as relatively desirable.

Format. In drawing the items for each section, the artist attempted to balance for size, scale, complexity, and shading (see examples in Figure 1). The items measure

Figure 1. Examples of items from the adult figures, child figures, and objects sections of the Sex Role Learning Index.

9 × 10 cm and for each of the child and adult figures sections are mounted 1 cm apart on 40.5 × 35.5 cm arrays, with three items centered on the top and bottom rows and four items centered in the middle row. Positions in the arrays were determined randomly, with the restriction that no more than two masculine or feminine stereotyped items occur consecutively in the same row. Items depicting objects are presented on individual cards.

Administration. The SERLI uses a simple *Q*-sort technique to gain a free- and forced-choice classification of the objects into sex role categories. The free-choice classification is used to score SRC, and the forced-choice classification is used to measure SRD. Objects were used because they are free from biasing figures of either sex, and they allow the child to first classify and later choose the same activities and roles without seeing the same drawings twice.

To begin testing, the experimenter, seated across a table from the child, says, "I am going to show you some pictures and I want you to tell me if they are for boys, girls, or both boys and girls." Three boxes, 15 × 15 × 15 cm in size, with a slot in the top, are then placed on the table. A box on one end of the row is labeled "for boys," the box on the other end is labeled "for girls," and the box in the middle is labeled "for both boys and girls." The boxes are labeled several times until the child understands. Next, the child is shown each item in the objects section, one at a time, and is told, "Here is a picture of a/an (object name). Who would use a/an (object name) to (activity name), boys? girls? or both boys and girls?" The order of the verbal alternatives

Table 1: Contents of the Sex Role Learning Index Sections

Masculine stereotype		Feminine stereotype	
Activity	Object	Activity	Object
	Child figures		
Hammering	Hammer/nails	Ironing	Iron
Digging	Shovel	Sewing	Needle/thread
Baseball	Ball/bat	Cooking	Stove
Car play	Car	Dishwashing	Dishes
Boxing	Boxing gloves	Sweeping	Broom
	Adult figures		
Sawing	Saw	Feeding baby	Baby bottle
Policeman	Badge	Teacher	Desk/books
Soldier	Rifle	Serving juice	Pitcher/glasses
Fire fighter	Fire hat	Combing hair	Hairbrush/mirror
Doctor	Stethoscope	Making pie	Apples/knife/bowl

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jects sections of the Sex Role Learning

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on, one at a time, and is told, "Here is a
(object name). Who would use a/an
(activity name), boys? girls? or both
" The order of the verbal alternatives

Feminine stereotype	
ity	Object
	Iron
	Needle/thread
	Stove
ng	Dishes
	Broom
aby	Baby bottle
	Desk/books
uice	Pitcher/glasses
hair	Hairbrush/mirror
e	Apples/knife/bowl

offered by the experimenter is alternated during testing. After the child responds *verbally* to the question, the child is given the item to place in the appropriate box. This procedure was found to facilitate sorting by making the task more concrete and enjoyable for the child. After recording this free-choice classification, the "both" box is removed, and the items from that box are sorted into the remaining two alternatives. The experimenter says, "These things are for both boys and girls. But who would use a/an (object name) to (activity name) more, boys? or girls?" The results of this forced-choice classification are then recorded.

The child is then shown the child figures section, with the figures that correspond to the child's sex. The experimenter first points to and names each item and then asks, "If you could do any one of these things, which one would you like to do best?" The child's choice is removed from the array, and the procedure is repeated until all of the items are removed. The order of the child's choices is recorded. The adult figures section is then administered using the same procedure, except that the experimenter says, "Which one of these things would you like to do or be when you grow up?" Testing time is approximately 10 minutes, and pilot studies have shown that the order in which the three SERLI sections are given does not significantly affect SERLI scores.

Scoring. In the SERLI, SRD is scored as percentage of agreement between the child's forced-choice classification of the objects and the sex role stereotypes of those objects. The child's "own SRD" score refers to agreement on objects stereotyped as being appropriate for the child's sex, while "opposite SRD" refers to agreement on objects stereotyped as being appropriate for the sex opposite that of the child. For example, if a boy classified 8 of 10 masculine items as being for boys and 6 of 10 feminine items as being for girls, his own SRD score would be 80 and his opposite SRD score would be 60, suggesting that he is more aware of his own (masculine) sex role than his opposite (feminine) sex role.

For SRP, the sex-appropriate items are defined by sex role stereotypes, while for SRC the sex-appropriate items are defined by the child in the previous administration of the objects section. To score SRC, items defined as being appropriate for both sexes are scored as sex-appropriate items. If all, or none, of the items in a section are defined as being sex appropriate by the child, then SRC cannot be scored for that section. On the other hand, when the child's classifications of the objects perfectly agree with sex role stereotypes, SRP and SRC would be equal, since the sex-appropriate items would be the same. Scoring tables based on the order of the child's choices make scoring the SERLI very simple.

For each section (child and adult figures), the scoring of SRP and SRC is based on the order in which the sex-appropriate items are chosen and the probabilities of making those choices. If 5 of 10 items in a section are defined as being sex appropriate, the initial probability of making a sex-appropriate choice (P_a) is .50. P_a obviously changes after each choice, whether or not it was sex appropriate. For example, if the first choice from the section was sex inappropriate, P_a = .555 for the second choice. Conceptually, if P_a is relatively high, the score given for a sex-appropriate choice should be low, since such a choice does not unambiguously indicate any more than random choosing. However, if P_a is low, for instance when only 1 of 6 items remaining is sex appropriate, the score for a sex-appropriate choice should be high, since it indicates a departure from chance expectation in favor of sex appropriateness.

In each SERLI section, the inverse of the sum of the probabilities of the sex-appropriate choices ($1/\Sigma P_a$) is used as an index of preference for the sex-appropriate items. For each child, $1/\Sigma P_a$ is calculated separately for the child and adult figures sections, and is compared to the distribution of $1/\Sigma P_a$ values for all possible orders of choosing the sex-appropriate items from each array. Since in scoring SRC the child determines the number of sex-appropriate items, nine probability distributions, representing from one to nine sex-appropriate items per array, have been normalized and standardized with means of 50 and standard deviations of 10. Scores range from 20 to 80, and an increasing score represents an increasing preference for the sex-appropriate items. A score of 80, given for choosing all of the n sex-appropriate items in n choices, represents the maximum masculine preference for boys and the maximum feminine preference for girls. A score of 50 represents random choosing with regard to sex roles.

This probabilistic scoring system is very sensitive to the order of choosing the sex-appropriate items, which is considered a rank ordering of their desirability. For example, there are 20 possible ways to choose 5 sex-appropriate items from an array of 10 items in 7 choices. Suppose one child made sex-inappropriate selections on Choices 1 and 2, while another child made sex-inappropriate selections on Choices 1 and 6. Typical scoring systems would assign the same score to both children, since they chose the same items and made the same number of "errors." However, the second child demonstrated a higher preference for the sex-appropriate items in the order of his choices. In the SERLI scoring system, the first child would receive a score of 59, indicating a moderate sex-appropriate preference, while the second child would receive a score of 65, correctly reflecting a higher sex-appropriate preference. Furthermore, the difference between the children's scores is not arbitrary but reflects the difference between their rankings of the desirability of the sex-appropriate items as compared to the same probability model.

Subjects

A total of 63 boys and 56 girls, obtained from three university preschools and two community day-care centers were used in these studies. They averaged 51.4 months in age, were of average intelligence or above, predominantly white, and from the upper- and upper-middle socioeconomic classifications in Hollingshead's *Two-Factor Index of Social Position* (Hollingshead, Note 1). A median split on age was used to form a younger group, which averaged 44.3 months in age (range: 35–51 months), and an older group, which averaged 58.3 months in age (range: 52–65 months). This procedure resulted in significant separation between age groups for boys and girls ($p < .001$) and permitted

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Articles for Parents

In order of dissemination

1. O'Brien, M. "An Equal Approach." Mother's Manual, Jan/Feb. 1982, p.46-58.
2. Nasper, E.D. "Why Concern about Preschool Sex Stereotyping." In B.S. Heathington, Ed. Breaking Barriers: Overcoming Career Stereotyping in Early Childhood, 1981. ERIC ED 225 672.
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6. "Definitions of Sexism." Fact Sheets on Institutional Sexism. Council on Interracial Books for Children Publication, N.Y., January 1982.
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9. Gambrell, L.B. and F.L. Smith. "Images of Women at Work in Children's Literature." In B.S. Heathington, Ed. Breaking Barriers: Overcoming Career Stereotyping in Early Childhood, 1981. ERIC ED 225 672.
10. Office of Education, "Together We Can: An Awareness Training Program in Sex-Role Stereotyping for Preschool Educators and Parents of Preschool Children." ERIC Clearinghouse, 1979, ERIC ED 192 220, pp.103-105.
11. Michigan State Department of Education. "A Supplement to a Packet of Elementary Classroom Activities To Teach Students About Sex Role Stereotyping, Preschool to Second Grade." ERIC Clearinghouse, August 1984, ERIC ED 288 753, pp. 7-9, 40-45.
12. What Can We do at Home? (Appendix H:113)

Appendix H

WHAT CAN WE DO AT HOME?

WHAT CAN WE DO AT HOME?

The following is a short list compiled from varying sources of what can be done at home to raise the consciousness of stereotyping for ourselves and our children.

1. Create a non-sexist environment at home by reevaluating the assignment of chores. Are they based on age, skill, level of interest, gender? If the adult responsibilities are seemingly divided across gender lines, explain to your children that they are based on interest, skill or time constraints. Do not allow them to passively agree some things are women's works and some thing are better for men to do.
2. If you have children of different genders treat them differently based on age and individuality. When you do treat your children differently in a stereotypical fashion ask yourself if you are making assumptions based on gender.
3. Be careful to praise your children more for their accomplishments and not how pretty or handsome they look. Though it is not wrong to tell your children that they are beautiful,it is detrimental as a primary focus. Particularly for girls beginning adolescence, it can become an obsessive focus and have a tremendous effect on self-esteem.
4. Don't buy them blatantly sexist items. Of course offering children choices is essential but as parents we have the ability to limit those choices. There are many ways to circumvent the notion that your child must have frilliest barrette or the biggest gun. Show them the limits of stereotypical toys.
5. Encourage your children to experience a variety of different activities specific to both genders and encourage them to play with children of both sexes. Invite friends over who have children of the other sex than your children.
6. When you see sexism occurring in storybooks, television, real life, etc. point it out, take the opportunity for a discussion and ask them what they think. At this point they have developed the language for communication about this issue. You might even learn something!
7. Fight Back-get angry when you see manufacturers making and advertising blatantly stereotypical toys that pigeon-hole our children. Write to the manufacturers, the television stations, the producers of children's shows, and publishing companies. Even if you get no response it is certainly a catharsis and an opportunity for your child to see you act on your beliefs, they too can participate in the letter writing.